

### DUCKLINGS LEAVING THE NEST

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Nearly every season queries are raised concerning the methods employed by ducks in getting their young to the ground when the nesting hollow is located at some considerable height, so perhaps the following account of one incident which occurred on Gordons Swamp, Warrattenbullie, may be of interest. The ducks in this instance were Grey Teal (*Querquedula gibberifrons*).

Several of us were fishing from the bank of the swamp on the afternoon of January 23, 1949, when suddenly there was a slight splash and a young teal appeared on the water a few feet from the edge. All being

intent on watching for a bite, no one actually saw where it came from, but as a small boy ran out to catch it, a second young teal was seen to fall from a hollow about thirty feet up in a dry gum, and land alongside the first. Number three quickly followed, hitting the boy on the head, then bounced off into the water without harm to either boy or duckling. These three were followed at short intervals by three more, and at this stage about a dozen people were interested spectators.

There was no wind, and the ducklings fell almost straight down, head legs and wings

being fully extended as in adult flying, and they hit the water quite flat without any apparent change in position, immediately bobbing up like corks and swimming to the shelter of a nearby log. A fisherman told me that a pair of teal was swimming about 20 yards out when he arrived, but the nearest now to be seen were two resting on a log 100 yards away. Evidently the young just jumped out when they were ready without any signal from the parent birds, who showed no sign of agitation nor did they make any attempt to collect the young while we were present.